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General Assembly
Fifty-eighth session

Official Records

28th plenary meeting
Monday, 13 October 2003, 10 a.m.
New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Organization of work of the fifty-eighth regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

Second report of the General Committee (A/58/250/Add.1)

The President: I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the second report of the General Committee (A/58/250/Add.1), concerning a request by the Secretary-General for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item, "Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia"; a request by the Netherlands for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item, "Admission of the International Criminal Court to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund"; and a request contained in a letter dated 3 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, addressed to the President of the General Assembly, concerning the allocation of agenda item 108, "Crime prevention and criminal justice".

In paragraph 1 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission to Liberia", be included in the agenda of the current session. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 1 (b), the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the additional item be allocated to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that this item becomes agenda item 165.

In paragraph 2 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that an additional item, entitled "Admission of the International Criminal Court to membership in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund", be included in the agenda of the current session. May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President: In paragraph 2 (b), the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that the additional item be allocated to the Fifth Committee. May I take it that the Assembly decides to allocate this item to the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President: I should like to inform members that this item becomes agenda item 166.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

03-56874 (E)

In paragraph 3 of the report, the General Committee recommends to the General Assembly that agenda item 108, "Crime prevention and criminal justice", also be considered directly in plenary meeting for the sole purpose of taking action on the draft United Nations Convention against Corruption.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to also consider agenda item 108, "Crime prevention and criminal justice", directly in plenary meeting for the sole purpose of taking action on the draft United Nations Convention against Corruption?

It was so decided.

The President: The Chairmen of the Third and Fifth Committees will be informed of the decisions just taken.

Agenda item 7

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General (A/58/354)

The President: As members are aware, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General is mandated to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters which the Council has ceased to deal with.

In that connection, the General Assembly has before it a note by the Secretary-General issued as document A/58/354. May I take it that the Assembly takes note of that document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 11

Report of the Security Council (A/58/2)

The President: As we begin our consideration of the report of the Security Council, I believe it important to draw attention to relevant provisions of several resolutions of the Assembly, including resolutions 47/233, 48/264 and 51/241, on what the Assembly's approach to the report ought to be. These resolutions concern the revitalization of the General Assembly and reform issues generally. The practical effect of the relevant provisions of the resolutions is that they present specific courses of action the Assembly and, indeed, the President should take in considering the report of the Security Council.

For example, first, the resolutions encourage Member States to participate actively in the substantive and in-depth discussions on and consideration of the report of the Security Council, in order to fulfil the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and, secondly, the President is asked to assess the debate on this item and consider the need for further consideration of the report. In light of this assessment, informal consultations might be undertaken to discuss the need and content of any action by the Assembly based on the debate.

I wish to remind the Assembly that this agenda item remains open — I underscore, remains open — to further discussion necessary during the year, including discussion on additional reports the Council may present to the General Assembly.

I would encourage delegations to keep in mind these matters, contained in resolutions that this Assembly adopted by consensus, as we address the Security Council's report.

Before I go any further, may I make again a very special request relating to cellular phones. Please keep your cellular phones on vibrate so as to allow speakers, and even myself in the Chair, to better follow what is taking place. It is most disruptive, when a speaker is at the rostrum, for cellular phones to sound off. You would not like it to happen when your representative is speaking, please do not do it to anybody else. I crave your indulgence in this particular matter.

I now give the floor to the President of the Security Council, Mr. John Negroponte, to introduce the report of the Council.

Mr. Negroponte: I am pleased to report, Mr. President, that I forgot to bring my cellular phone with me this morning.

I have the privilege, in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of October 2003, to introduce the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

On behalf of the Security Council, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Hunte, on your

election as President of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I know that I speak for all members of the Security Council when I say that I am certain that, during your tenure, relations between the General Assembly and the Security Council will be further strengthened, as we work together to promote the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The report I am introducing covers the period from 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003. The seemingly ever-increasing trend towards an increased workload for the Security Council continued during this reporting period.

There were many areas of focus, including Iraq, the Middle East and Afghanistan, which are covered in detail in the report. Africa continued to be a major priority for the Council, which responded to worsening conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, while working to encourage and foster continuing progress in bringing peace and stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. The Security Council undertook missions to Central and West Africa and focused on several issues affecting Africa, such as the threat of small arms and mercenaries and the role of Council missions and other United Nations mechanisms in promoting peace and security on the continent.

In addition to addressing specific ongoing conflicts, the Security Council also held thematic discussions directly related to the Council's work, which will allow for fruitful discussions with the larger United Nations membership. The Council held open debates on women, peace and security, on children and armed conflict, on small arms, on the interaction of the Security Council and regional organizations, on the threat of small arms and mercenary activities to West Africa, and on the pacific settlement of disputes. The issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict was pursued on a six-monthly basis, with debates held in December 2002 and June 2003.

The serious and continuing threat to global peace and security posed by terrorism remained a primary focus of the Council. The Counter-Terrorism Committee continued to work intensively to fulfil its mandate as set out in resolution 1373 (2001). The Committee conducted detailed dialogues with all Member States, concentrating on ensuring, as a first priority, that States have in place legislation covering all aspects of resolution 1373 (2001) and the executive machinery to tackle terrorist financing.

These issues I have mentioned provide only a quick overview of some of the larger areas covered by the work of the Council during the last year.

During the debate on this agenda item in recent years, Assembly members have put forward a number of ideas with regard to a better presentation of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly. Assembly members have suggested a shorter and more focused report, and I am happy to say that this year's report is 68 pages shorter than last year's, which in turn was itself more than 300 pages shorter than its predecessor. This year's report also opens with a narrative overview of the Council's activities, a continuation of an innovation begun last year at the suggestion of Assembly members.

Although the last year was an especially busy one, there was an increase in the already growing trend toward transparency in the work of the Security Council. The Council took care to hold as many public meetings as possible and regularly conducted wrap-up sessions and provided opportunities for all Member States to attend briefings.

For example, of the 200 meetings held during the period of this report, only eight were closed, excluding the ongoing consultations with troop-contributing countries. This compares with 32 closed meetings during the previous year. This emphasis on greater transparency is intended to allow the wider United Nations membership to remain in closer touch with the Council and its deliberations.

In concluding, I would like to express my appreciation to my colleagues on the Security Council for their deep dedication and commitment to the cause of peace and security. On behalf of all Council members, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his vision and leadership and to express our gratitude to the members of the Secretariat for their professionalism and daily support, without which the Council could not complete its duties.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Let me begin by expressing my appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador John D. Negroponte, for his introduction of the annual report of the Security Council on its work. I would also like to thank the United Kingdom and Spain for drafting the introduction to the report.

In the period covered by this report, the issue of Iraq figured prominently on the agenda of the Security Council, as the introduction to the report indicates. Much of the Council's time and energy was consumed by discussions of the Iraqi issue. In that process, questions have been raised on the effectiveness of the Security Council with regard to its primary role of maintaining international peace and security.

I understand that there was an active discussion among Security Council members on how each member's views should be reflected in the report during the drafting process. I was looking forward to hearing these frank views in an open meeting of the Council, as has occurred in previous years. However, contrary to the previous practice, no Council member took the floor to present their views this time. From the standpoint of ensuring transparency and accountability of the Council to non-members, it was regrettable that we were not able to hear the views of the Council members directly.

I do not intend to comment on the substance of each of the activities of the Council as summarized in the report at this time. However, let me raise two points which Council members may deem worth considering.

My first point relates to the issue of ensuring the openness of the activities of the Council to non-members. Japan welcomes the fact that the Council has become increasingly aware of the need to ensure its openness to non-members in recent years and that open debate meetings are now held more frequently, as was just confirmed in the report of Ambassador Negroponte.

From time to time a Council meeting which had been announced as an open briefing has been changed to an open debate. That should be a welcome development, but those changes in format were often announced on very short notice. In the case of the discussion on Kosovo, that took place in August, for example, we were informed of the change of format for the first time in the *Journal* of the very day on which the debate was to be held. As a result, not many non-Council members were able to take full advantage of the opportunity presented.

We would like to request that the Council make sure that reasonable advance notice is given in case of such changes, in order to enable non-Council members to make full use of their opportunity to participate. The same thing can also be said of the emergency meetings of the Council, such as the one held at the beginning of this month. I know it is difficult to announce the holding of an emergency meeting well in advance, simply because it is an emergency meeting. However, I consider it necessary for the Council to search for a means to ensure that all non-members are informed of such an emergency meetings beforehand so that they can express their views if they wish to do so.

In addition, there have been cases in the past in which wrap-up sessions, whose original purpose was to review the activities of the Council for the month, digressed from their original purpose by engaging in a thematic discussion that was totally unrelated to the Council's activities during that month.

These are some of the examples of the procedural issues that have caused frustration among non-members such as my country. I hope that the members of the Council would continue to make efforts towards procedural improvements in these areas.

On a second matter, Japan would like to request that the Council continue to look for means to involve more substantially those non-Council members with a vital interest in an issue under discussion, in the Council's decision-making process.

As for resolutions that have budgetary implications, including those relating to peacekeeping operations (PKOs), political missions and peace-consolidation, transparency needs to be ensured, particularly with respect to major financial contributing countries, when adopting resolutions or reviewing their implementation.

A mechanism for consultation has been established between the Council and troop contributing countries (TCCs) regarding specific PKOs. Some mechanism of a similar nature is needed for major financial contributors, because they are obliged to account for their financial contributions to their taxpayers. It is not reasonable to expect that those non-Council members which share the bulk of such expenses will simply passively issue the cheques necessary for implementation of the decisions made by the 15 countries on the Council, without being given a chance to consult on the decisions or to confirm whether the decisions have been properly implemented.

In this connection, I would like to point out again that we have yet to receive sufficient explanation with regard to budgetary transparency for Security Council

missions, an issue that my delegation has raised continuously. However, I wish to add on this occasion, that Japan does acknowledge that improvement has been realized on other issues of transparency, including the provision of detailed briefings before and after the dispatch of Security Council missions.

Procedural improvement of the Council is important; however, that alone is not sufficient to enhance the legitimacy of the Council. We need to reform the Council by including those countries which are both willing and able to shoulder responsibility at the global level as permanent members. I intend to elaborate Japan's view on this issue under the agenda item, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters", which is to be taken up following the discussion on this item.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): We welcome this debate on the report of the Security Council (A/58/2) and the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council (A/57/47 and Corr.1). As in previous discussions, it is the expectation of my delegation that the views being expressed here, especially on the report of the Security Council, will be taken into account by the members of the Council.

Namibia rejoiced when peace finally came to Angola, after many years of political strife. While the guns have gone silent, the Government of Angola is earnestly grappling with social and economic challenges. It is therefore imperative, as we applaud the positive developments in Angola, that we, as members of the international community, support the efforts of the Government towards the consolidation of peace and reconstruction. The spirit of national reconciliation, which the people of Angola have embarked upon, can only be nurtured by favourable social and economic conditions.

Following three years of repeated appeals by the African Member States, the Security Council has finally approved a new concept of operations for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which strengthened the Mission. Namibia welcomes this positive step and the installation of the transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

However, we remain concerned that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country continue to be violated. The situation in the eastern part remains particularly worrying. Gross violations of human rights, including rape, murder, the destruction of property, the large-scale displacement of civilians, the use of child soldiers and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, continue unabated.

Namibia welcomes the recommendations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as contained in the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2003/653). We concur with the sentiments of paragraph 4 on the role to be played by the leadership of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, "to put the national ahead of the factional interest". In that respect, let me add that this will only be possible if and when all the States in the region uphold in earnest Article 2 of the Charter.

Furthermore, we welcome the recommendation concerning intolerance of impunity. However, to achieve the desired goal, pressure must be exerted on those who hold influence over the armed factions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is not enough to deplore the impunity that accompanies the aggression and the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of that country; those responsible must be held accountable.

We welcome the proposed international conference on the Great Lakes region and hope that this will mark the beginning of lasting peace for the Congolese people, as well as for the people of the whole region.

My delegation read the report of the Security Council mission to West Africa (S/2003/688) with great interest.

It is gratifying to note that the situation in Sierra Leone has stabilized, and that the process of governance is on course. If we are to meaningfully assist the people of Sierra Leone in that regard, we must help them to create conditions for sustainable development, in which their natural resources will be exploited to their benefit. It is our hope that the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme will contribute towards this end. While the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone is drawing down, the situation in the region must be taken into account, as should the possible impact it might have on the reconstruction of

Sierra Leone. Particular attention must be paid to the situation of women, children and refugees.

My delegation welcomes the joint mission of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau to that country. We support the recommendations of the mission for continued collaboration between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and for increased assistance to the Economic Community of West African States.

The commitment of Polisario Front and the Kingdom of Morocco to the ceasefire is a means to an end. While it is commendable, it must not be seen as a substitute to the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination. My delegation strongly supports the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 1495 (2003) and calls for an increased role by the Secretary-General on this matter. In this regard, we applaud the Polisario Front for its response to the peace plan, as presented by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy.

There is unanimity in the Organization that Security Council resolutions are binding on all Member States and that anything short of that will discredit the Organization. It is therefore incomprehensible that Security Council resolutions on Palestine, and in particular resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) continue to be flouted with impunity. We cannot uphold international law when adherence to Security Council decisions is an option for some and an obligation for others. Pressure cannot be exerted on the occupied, while the occupiers are being exonerated. This concern is as valid for the situation in the Middle East as it is for other situations anywhere in the world. The people of Palestine deserve their own State, side by side with that of Israel.

When the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 (2000), it reaffirmed the role of women in the process of peace-making and peace-building. In many parts of the world, women are making their full contribution to post-conflict reconstruction, a trend that must be encouraged and supported. With regard to children and armed conflict, we call for their full protection and urge those responsible to desist from using and recruiting them.

Namibia reaffirms its opposition to all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, and reiterates its determination to combat it by every means available to it, in accordance with our national laws. Undoubtedly, we must enhance cooperation among Member States to that end.

But in doing so, Namibia continues to maintain that, measures to combat international terrorism must be in conformity with international obligations arising from treaties and other rules of international law. We firmly hold the view that the principle of the rule of law is as central in today's globalized institutions dedicated to combating terrorism as it is to national political systems. There is a need to ensure that those legal tools dedicated to combat terrorism do not undermine values that are fundamental to democracy, liberty and justice — values that lie at the heart of the international constitutional order.

In these times of growing international tension, Namibia is concerned about the unilateral pressure being exerted on States parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to circumscribe their legal commitment to the Statute. It is each State's sovereign prerogative to become, or not to become, a party — or even to withdraw. Furthermore, Namibia has once again noticed with great concern the adoption of another Security Council resolution — resolution 1497 (2003) — under Chapter VII of the Charter, as if the ICC were a threat to peace or an act of aggression. In our view, such resolutions can undermine the jurisdiction of the ICC.

We last deliberated on these two items 12 months ago, when a cloud of a possible war in Iraq was hanging over our heads and when all eyes were on the members of the Security Council in the hope that they would reaffirm the centrality of the United Nations and avert war. What has transpired between then and now, in a way, shapes our deliberations on peace and security during this session. We have all welcomed the proposal to have a high-level review of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in 2005. The reform of the Security Council is part of the commitment our leaders made at the Millennium Summit.

The challenges confronting us in the area of peace and security are a direct result of the unrepresentative and undemocratic nature of the composition and decision-making of the Security Council. For 12 years, brilliant ideas have been advanced on how to correct the situation. For 12 years, we have continued to seek courage to expand and

democratize the Security Council. How much more must the international situation deteriorate before we make the Security Council relevant to today's challenges?

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador John Negroponte, President of the Security Council, for having introduced the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly, covering the period from 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003 (A/58/2). The submission of the annual report of the Security Council, under Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter, is a commendable practice, which should enable a useful and wide-ranging dialogue between these two principal organs of the United Nations. The report is the Council's opportunity to address the universal constituency on vital issues of international peace and security.

My delegation welcomes the efforts that have been made to produce an accessible and user-friendly annual report of the Security Council: one can easily find the subjects under review, the number of meetings involved, the number of resolutions and presidential statements adopted, the documents that have been circulated, dates, and so on. However useful, the report still falls short of an overview of the decision-making process, the goals envisaged or any of the positions advocated by the members. We have been seeking a report that is substantive rather than formal, analytical rather than descriptive.

The report's introduction conveys a sense of the Council's response to new and continuing challenges. We look forward to a report that provides a fuller analysis of how the Council deals with issues under its review. It is emblematic that one of the subjects that most figured on the agenda of the Council during the period covered by the report — the situation in Iraq — including debates at the ministerial level, has been accorded no more than three sentences in the analytical section of the document. It seems important to know how the Council manages its work, including possible options that probably were at its disposal at the time.

We are aware that the Security Council is a body in which confidentiality and informality regarding the decision-making process are part of the business. The safeguards, however, should not compromise the accountability of the Council to the wide membership, which has entrusted it with the power to deal with the maintenance of international peace and security. Transparency adds to the specific weight of Security Council decisions. A better clarification of the Council's modus operandi can contribute to dispelling possible misgivings regarding its effectiveness and even relevance. Transparency and participation can only enhance credibility and effectiveness.

We should encourage those practices that seem to be constructive and that promote a better relationship between the Member States and the Council. The briefings given by the presidency of the Security Council at the end of each informal consultation are a valuable initiative for our follow-up of the discussions that are taking place. Moreover, the end-of-month wrap-up meetings, which could be a regular practice, are positive means to enhance interaction and to promote synergy.

My delegation also understands that Security Council missions can play an important role in determining how the United Nations should be engaged in efforts on the ground, as they have been in the cases of Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, the Great Lakes region, Kosovo and, by the end of the month, Afghanistan. The submission of reports and the discussions that usually take place in the aftermath can produce a constructive and vibrant exchange of ideas.

Finally, the meetings with troop-contributing countries are an important tool that could be institutionalized, since the great majority of Member States whose personnel take part in peacekeeping operations are not represented on the Council. The growing complexity of United Nations missions mandated by the Council requires careful consideration of that contribution by all States concerned.

Notwithstanding those positive developments, opportunities for exchanges between members and non-members remain limited. Although discussions in the Council should sometimes flow more freely, at times it is entirely appropriate, or even necessary, that Member States set out national positions during open meetings. Ample opportunity and due consideration should be given to the messages conveyed by the membership as a whole, as they can enhance the debate and thus provide an important contribution to the Council's deliberations.

To conclude, let me observe that attention should be drawn to the increasing engagement of the Security Council in post-conflict situations and in the realities of reconstruction. There, concerns about political order

and security are combined with discussions of an economic and social nature. Brazil favours, in that regard, a better defined partnership between the Security Council and the other main bodies of the United Nations system, so as to contemplate the specific requirements of those situations. We call upon the Security Council to look for greater interaction with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as in the cases of Guinea-Bissau and Burundi, so as to favour a comprehensive and in-depth approach to the problems with which it is faced. Within the framework of a broader interpretation, making fuller use of the provision contained in Article 65 of the Charter would be a first step in a positive direction.

Mr. Ashiru (Nigeria): I wish to express the appreciation of the delegation of Nigeria to the President of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, for introducing the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The report of the Security Council (A/58/2) provides invaluable insights into the activities of the Council during the course of the preceding year. The report highlights issues such as the maintenance of international peace and security, disarmament and international humanitarian efforts. Significantly, it represents the efforts of the Security Council to make itself accountable to the membership of the United Nations, in accordance with the provisions of Article 24 of the Charter.

Nigeria is encouraged by the fact that the Council continues to respond positively to the demands of the membership that its report should be more analytical, concise and easy to read. We welcome the significant improvement in the quality of the report, particularly of the statistical information provided.

The introduction, which summarizes activities of the Council as they relate to specific conflict areas is also welcome, as it makes for easy reference to the specific subject matter. We commend that improvement in the format and urge its retention.

Despite its best intentions, the Security Council continues to be besieged with the thorny issue of conflict prevention and resolution. While the Council has made appreciable progress in resolving some conflicts, as borne out by the number of peace agreements signed, it is our view that the Council, in conjunction with the international community, can still to do more to make the world a safer place.

In that regard, Nigeria endorses the involvement of the wider society, such as subregional and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, international financial institutions and development agencies, in the process of conflict prevention, management and resolution. Their collective contribution can no doubt substantially help in the reduction of socio-political and economic pressures, pressures which, if not defused, often lead to violent conflicts and sometimes to war.

With respect to the situation in Sierra Leone, we note the continued progress that has been made since the conclusion of democratic elections in that country. We support the Security Council's modified withdrawal plan for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and suggest that caution be used in its implementation to ensure that the security of the country is not negatively affected. Nigeria supports Security Council resolution 1508 (2003) on Sierra Leone and calls on the Council to assist in the ongoing task of the integration of ex-combatants.

Sierra Leone still needs to be assisted in the training of its police and army, both of which will be fully responsible for the maintenance of security in the country after the withdrawal of United Nations troops. The Sierra Leone Government also needs further assistance to establish an effective civilian administration and political institutions, particularly courts of law, that will ensure practical implementation of the rule of law. This is necessary to ensure that the gains of the peace process are not lost.

In that connection, we observe that the Security Council has played a commendable role in addressing complex humanitarian, political and security situations in the Mano River Union States, as well as in other States in West Africa, especially Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. However, in order to ensure lasting peace in the subregion, we urge the Council to come up with a comprehensive security arrangement for the entire Mano River Union area that would address the cycle of strife, instability and conflicts.

Nigeria remains committed to the Security Council's efforts at implementing its current mandate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We note with dismay that despite the authorization by the Council of phase III of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the number of combatants

presenting themselves for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration remains low. Progress has unfortunately been hampered by continued violence and obstructionist activity by some leaders of the armed groups. In that regard, we urge the parties to cooperate and facilitate early implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendation on the expansion of the mandate of MONUC. We welcome Security Council assistance in the implementation of the disarmament demobilization and reintegration programme, and urge Member States as well as troop-contributing countries to provide the additional troops, personnel and equipment needed to stabilize the situation, particularly in the north-east Ituri district of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We reaffirm our support and commitment to Security Council resolution 1484 (2003), which authorized deployment of an Interim Emergency Multinational Force in Bunia. We note with satisfaction that the Force made a significant contribution to stabilizing security and the humanitarian situation in Bunia. Nigeria welcomes the establishment of a Government of national unity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and would urge continued national reconciliation efforts, which, we hope, will lead to durable peace and stability.

The situation in Liberia tested and stretched the ability of the international community to respond proactively to a humanitarian catastrophe. The magnitude of the human suffering was such that Nigeria could not ignore the scale of the destruction and human carnage. Nigeria's decision to deploy its troops in the face of obvious perils and attendant costs was predicated on the reality of the situation in Liberia. Nigeria's offer of political asylum to former President Charles Taylor and the early deployment of its troops were a humanitarian gesture to arrest the deteriorating situation and facilitate the deployment of the multinational force.

In this regard, we note that the Security Council has remained engaged with the protracted conflict situation in Liberia. Nigeria welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) establishing the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and calls on the international community to support and ensure the effective implementation of that resolution. We urge the various factions in Liberia to give peace a chance, and to effect national reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation of their country. The people of Liberia deserve nothing but peace, having been subjected to almost 14 years of civil war.

Nigeria endorses the Security Council's continued efforts to contain terrorism and urges Member States to support those efforts. We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq, on 19 August 2003 which resulted in the death of 22 people, including Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq. We affirm our support and commitment to Security Council resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of civilians and the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, and urge strict compliance with it. We commend the Counter-Terrorism Committee for effectively galvanizing an international coalition against international terrorism.

Those efforts confirm the determination of the Council to live up to its Charter obligations for the maintenance of international peace and security. Nigeria remains committed to the global effort to combat international terrorism in all its ramifications.

Nigeria commends the briefings by the Security Council to non-members of the Council as well as the briefings to the Chairmen of the regional groups. We note the regularity of the meetings and consultations with troop-contributing countries especially the system of briefing those countries before the Secretary-General's report on a mission is presented to the Council.

As a major troop-contributing country, Nigeria believes that the continuation of this process of consultation by the Security Council will eliminate frictions early on and will facilitate effective peacekeeping operations in the field. Furthermore, we urge that the end-of-month wrap-up meetings of the Council remain as informal and interactive as possible. Nigeria supports those meetings as they provide Member States the opportunity to exchange views with the Council and enable them to benefit from lessons learned by all sides.

We note that the Security Council undertook a number of ad hoc missions to conflict locations during the period under review. Nigeria supports that strategy. We believe that such missions will enhance the ability of the Council to properly assess situations. In that regard, Nigeria commends Council for dispatching missions to West Africa, the Democratic Republic of

the Congo and the Great Lakes region. We urge the continuation of that practice.

Nigeria reaffirms its support for thematic debates in the Council on such issues as women and peace and security; children and armed conflict; and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa. These debates have always provided opportunities for the Council and Member States to focus on the issues in question.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, Nigeria remains committed to the reform and expansion of the Security Council so as to make it more responsive to contemporary global needs and challenges.

We note with dismay that obstacles continue to be placed against the adoption of any of the constructive proposals on the reform of the Security Council. We appreciate the changes that are being made in the Council's working method in response to demands by Member States for more openness and transparency. We consider these changes no more than marginal, and therefore reiterate our long held conviction that what is required is fundamental reform and expansion of the membership of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories.

It is only such reform that will reposition the Security Council to enable it respond to issues of international peace and security in a much more comprehensive, objective and effective manner. The overwhelming membership of our organization demands no less in the interest of its continued relevance.

Finally, Nigeria pledges its support for the efforts of the Security Council in making itself more responsive to global challenges and meeting the yearnings of Member States, and reiterates our determination to encourage the Council as it continues to improve its work methods and discharge its responsibility justly in the maintenance of international peace and security and in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: I would like to thank Ambassador John Negroponte, the Permanent Representative of the United States and current president of the Security Council for the month of October, for his comprehensive introduction of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

An analysis of the Charter proves how much exercise by the Security Council of its primary responsibility is linked to the consideration of its report by the General Assembly. Article 24, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter requires the Security Council to submit to the General Assembly an annual report on its work.

The presentation of the annual report of the Council to the Assembly creates rules that govern the relationship between the two principal organs of the United Nations. Consideration of this item always provides, we feel, an ideal opportunity for an exchange of views on how to improve the working methods of the Council to make them more transparent and how to limit the secrecy of this important organ.

The exercise we are involved in today should provide a valuable opportunity for our Assembly to consider in depth the activities of the Council and to identify measures that should be taken to make the necessary improvements.

Furthermore, this return to the previous practice of having two separate discussions on the two priority issues of the General Assembly, the annual report of the Security Council and the reform of that body, seems more appropriate to me. The first experiment of last year, whereby we merged these two items, showed its limitations as far as providing an opportunity to Member States to properly examine in a more detailed fashion these two items.

My delegation continues to welcome the inclusion, for the second time in the report, of a brief analytical summary. This analytical part provides indicators of achievement of the work done by the Council and should be supplemented by proposals or recommendations about how to improve its work.

This chapter of the report should not be limited to what has been done by the Council. It would be more useful to reflect in an objective manner on its failures and the reasons for those failures.

Only by making available to Member States a very useful, full and substantive document could they then be able to assess in depth the work of the Council. It is a matter of the Council's credibility that its internal rules of procedure are still provisional. 58

years after the creation of that body. The provisional rules have sometimes led to undesirable practices in the conduct of public meetings. In this respect I refer to the open debate that took place last month on the Middle East, during which States were confined to three minutes per delegation to express their views on a question as complex as the question of the Middle East. Any change to the rules adopted by the Council or to its practices should be stipulated in the rules of procedure.

On the other hand, we note a positive change with regard to the increase in the number of public meetings during the reporting period, providing an opportunity to non-members to state their views on items before the Council. However, the private informal consultations that are not covered by the provisional rules of procedure have become the norm, rather than the exception.

Given this situation, my delegation continues to believe that it would be wise for consultations following the open meetings to be open regularly to parties interested or concerned by the question under discussion in order to seek their views, which would enable the Council to have a better understanding of these subjects and hence, would help the Council to take decisions more advisedly.

On the other hand, we note with concern that most of the briefings by the Secretariat and by representatives of the Secretary-General for various conflicts, take place in private, not in open meetings, even though this information is also useful for non-member States of the Council who should also then have the opportunity to give their views on these conflicts in question.

The Security Council's wrap-up sessions are an innovation to be encouraged. These meetings, during which there is an interactive dialogue between members and non-members of the Council, are proof of the need for greater openness. These meetings have proven their usefulness and validity and should be institutionalized and held regularly.

Another aspect my delegation wanted to touch on has to do with consultations among members of the Council. It is disquieting to note that at a time when the Council, in a spirit of openness, is increasing the number of open debates, the ten non-permanent members are not fully involved in the process of consultation when it comes to delicate questions.

On substance we must recognize that the reporting period has been an extraordinary period for the Council in many respects and that it has been extremely active during this period. The Council has had some successes and some failures. First, we note the outstanding achievements of the Council in combating terrorism, particularly the adoption of resolutions 1455 and 1456 of 2003, strengthening the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and putting an end to the financing of and support for terrorism.

We also should take note of progress made with regard to a number of peacekeeping operations and of the support the Council has continued to give them, particularly in Africa. Thanks to the Council's commitment, positive changes have occurred in areas of conflict in Africa. Security Council missions to several areas of conflict have had a positive impact on the local protagonists.

In light of these good experiences, we encourage this kind of initiative and action and call for their formalization and their expansion to other areas of conflict. But the Council's contribution is far from meeting the aspirations of African countries. We think the Council should take the opportunity to act and provide useful support for the African Union and its mechanisms, to make it possible to attain the results hoped for in conflict settlement.

On the other hand, on the subject of the Middle East, the Council has fallen well short of the expectations placed in it. It has been prevented, thus far, from playing its rightful role here. The monthly briefing by the Secretariat and the holding of several open debates on occupied Palestine have unfortunately not had an impact on the situation on the ground. Either Israel has continued to flout the Council's resolutions or, more often than not, the Council has been unable to do anything because it has been blocked by the anachronistic privilege of the veto.

We are convinced that if the Council had approved the establishment of a United Nations or international presence in the occupied Palestinian territories, the violence we are witnessing today would have been largely avoided or lessened and the situation today would without doubt be more conducive to a negotiated settlement.

The other Arab question confronting the Council is the question of Iraq. In addressing that issue, the

Council is going through the most crucial period in its history. The Council should act immediately to put an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people, whose situation continues to be most tragic. The Council should enable the United Nations to play the central role incumbent upon it and should enable the Iraqi people to regain the full exercise of their sovereignty as soon as possible.

Indeed, as President Bouteflika said on 24 September 2003 during his address to the General Assembly (see A/58/PV.9), only the United Nations can legitimately and effectively accompany the institution-building and reconstruction of the country, and its role in these processes is of paramount importance.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): The report of the Security Council which is before us (A/58/2) is a bulky document of 221 pages, the real substance of which is contained in the introductory section of 14 pages, containing a descriptive account of the Council's activities, with the rest of the document consisting of documentary information and references. We would have benefited more from substance and analysis. The period covered was one of intense activity as the Council held more than 200 formal meetings along with numerous informal meetings and consultations.

The dominant issue in the Council's activity related to the disarmament of Iraq. It formed part of the dramatic events which captured world attention amid controversy and debate on the role of the United Nations. As a result of profound divisions, the Council was unable to control or determine the course of events following the decision taken by a coalition of States to take military action without authorization by the Council.

The record of the Security Council in that process had some positive elements as, in some ways, members sought to exercise their responsibility with due regard for the principles of the Charter. Political circumstances created a difficult time for the Council, which is still grappling with the complications flowing from the unfolding events.

The other area of concentrated effort was Africa where there were some positive indications of the Council's effectiveness in dealing with particular areas of conflict. We note the improving situation in Sierra Leone and Angola and intervention with respect to the conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There are concerns with the level and urgency of the Council's response to developments in both Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was hesitant and tardy. In Liberia, the slowness to engage may have caused a worsening of the humanitarian situation up to the time of the deployment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) vanguard force.

In general, we believe that the Council's engagement in Africa could have been fortified by a greater sense of urgency and a larger commitment of resources in terms of manpower and economic assistance to provide for security and stability in a situation where there had been so much disruption and humanitarian need.

With regard to the situation in the Middle East, which has been a continued source of anxiety and frustration, the year carried us through a familiar pattern of hope and despair. The road map was heralded as opening the way for peace, but that process has been unravelling. The role being played by the Security Council appears to be uncertain and tentative.

The United Nations is declared as being a party to the Quartet, under whose sponsorship the road map was launched. But it is not clear to some of us what is the agency through which the United Nations is represented in this process. There does not appear to be any active role being performed by the Organization in terms of the formulation of the plan or in the monitoring and strategy of implementation. The United Nations appears to be only a nominal partner or a bystander, since there is little evidence that the Security Council has been significantly engaged. The report merely indicates that the Council followed the work of the Quartet and reiterated support for the road map and the Quartet's efforts.

We also note that the Council continued to engage in holding debates on thematic issues, though there seems to be a lessening of that activity. In our view, such debates are an unnecessary addition to the work of the Council. Besides, the practice gives us increasing concern with respect to duplication and encroachment on subject matters which are more appropriately handled by the General Assembly. We would recommend that in order to respect the different competencies of the various organs, the practice of holding debates on thematic questions should be reviewed and possibly discontinued.

With regard to the operations of the Council, we would wish to make two observations. The first is that

there is continued concern about transparency and a failure to give due attention to the views of the wider membership expressed in the debates before the Council. When decisions are taken before a debate is held and when non-members are heard after Council members have spoken, the contribution of non-members cannot be really effective. We believe that it is incumbent on the Council in its decision-making, to take account of the views of interested parties and of the wider membership. That is a serious obligation on the Council, as it acts on behalf of the membership to safeguard international peace and security.

The second point relates to the tendency for decision-making to be concentrated among the permanent members and to the limited role assigned to the elected members of the body. We continue to feel concerned at this trend of a growing concentration of power in decision-making. We understand the realities of power, but the fact is that an undemocratic process is undermining the legitimacy of the Council's decisions and the authority of Council action.

Under Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of the international community and is therefore accountable to the General Assembly. Accordingly, we believe it is important that the Security Council be formally informed of the views, observations and recommendations of the General Assembly in relation to its report. As a follow-up to the present debate, we would suggest that a special meeting of the Security Council be held to hear the response of the General Assembly, either through a statement made by the President of the Assembly summarizing the debate or alternately through the adoption of a formal document by the General Assembly for presentation to the Council. Accountability should thus be formally acknowledged in order that the General Assembly can carry out its role envisaged in the Charter as a principal organ of the United Nations.

With regard to reform of the Security Council, we regret the lack of progress. We continue to underscore the importance of enlarging the composition of the Security Council to make it more representative, and of reforming its decision-making procedures to conform to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The situation cannot continue to be left in abeyance because of a failure to find consensus. Some new initiative should be undertaken, utilizing a democratic procedure to move the process forward.

Jamaica places its trust in you, Mr. President, having regard to the sense of commitment that you have demonstrated for the strengthening of the United Nations system. Your political experience and skill are our greatest assets for progress during this Assembly session. We need to show some positive results from the years of meetings, consultations, discussions and negotiations. To succeed, we will need the full support and contribution of all Members of the Organization. You can be assured, Sir, that Jamaica will do its part.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): First of all, I would like to thank the current President of the Security Council, Ambassador Negroponte, for his presentation of the report of the Council (A/58/2), which contains valuable information with which we can assess the Council's work over the 12-month reporting period, a period that has been particularly challenging in terms of its role of maintaining international peace and security.

The report highlights the broadening scope of responsibilities that the Security Council assumed on various fronts simultaneously, from regional crises to counter-terrorism, from the proliferation of small arms to the peaceful settlement of disputes and other thematic issues. We take note of the efforts that members of the Security Council, in fulfilling their responsibilities, have dedicated to improving the transparency, openness and inclusiveness — outreach to non-members — of their working methods. Here, I would like to recall the meaningful remarks made by some of my colleagues; here, I would mention the representatives of Jamaica, Japan, Brazil and Algeria. We fully agree with those remarks.

Further progress could be made in that direction. Indeed, transparency continues to be an important means by which non-members of the Council can not only be informed about the state of deliberations inside the Security Council, but also communicate their views and positions on specific issues. Another area where continued progress should be made is in the interaction between Security Council members and non-members whose interests are specially affected, as provided for in Article 31 of the Charter.

Last year the Secretary-General recommended, in his report "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), that the Security Council consider codifying recent changes in its practice. We renew our support for the Secretary-General's call.

Greater participation of non-members on issues such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping and transition to post-conflict peace-building could bring substantial value to Security Council decision-making and could help mobilize the active support of the international community. An enhanced dialogue with non-members could contribute to forging more effective and coherent global policies to address many pressing crises that confront us today. Promotion of the rule of law, protection of civilians in armed conflicts and gender mainstreaming in peace operations are further areas where interaction with the broader membership could be useful to the definition of Security Council lines of action. A framework for cooperation with troop-contributing countries has been established. There is still unexploited potential. Similar flexible mechanisms, based on transparency and dialogue, could be developed with regard to other components of Security Council activity, for example the management of special political missions.

The Security Council could further develop its relations and consultations with regional organizations, particularly those that have developed crisis-management capacities to such a level that they can effectively contribute to the collective action of the international community. The Council could thus avail itself more frequently of the views of those regional organizations, since they are often equipped with significant political and financial resources, and better able to mobilize the will of the main regional actors. The same applies to implementation of sanctions, where close cooperation between regional organizations and sanctions committees or monitoring groups can yield satisfactory results.

Italy supports the continuing efforts by sanctions committees to improve their working methods, thus increasing transparency and effective fulfilment of their mandates.

This rare opportunity for dialogue and interaction between two main organs of the United Nations, pursuant to Article 15 of the Charter, should not be merely ritualistic. It is our hope that it will induce specific, constructive proposals to improve the capacity of the Security Council to effectively and collectively face new global challenges and emerging threats to international peace and security.

In the context of United Nations reform, it is important to forge stronger interactive links among the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, so that their partnerships become more operational and effective which would strengthen the coherence of the United Nations system. Furthermore, better structural dialogue with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes could help in defining more credible mandates during crisis management, exit strategies and transition to peace-building. We should seize this moment to reform the practices of the Security Council and move the dialogue forward.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to begin by thanking His Excellency Mr. John Negroponte, the President of the Security Council, for introducing the report of the Council (A/58/2) to the General Assembly.

We attach great importance to the agenda item under consideration. What we are considering is the annual report by the Security Council to the General Assembly on the way the Council conducts its work, which constitutes the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the full membership of the United Nations. The submission of the annual report as stipulated by the Charter is the constitutional link which establishes accountability between two principal organs of the United Nations. In other words, the annual report represents an effort by the Council to live up to the expectations of the membership and to be accountable for its work to that membership, from which it receives its powers.

As to the content and structure of the report before us, we note that it has been prepared in line with the revised format agreed upon by the Security Council in 2002. It provides a guide to the activities of the Council in a concise manner. This is the second such report prepared in this way. Here, the Council aimed to enhance the quality of the report and to accommodate the views expressed on the previous format.

It is noticeable that the report is more streamlined, better focused, concise and shorter, avoiding overlapping and repetition and thereby also reducing the cost of its production. Thus, we believe that, to some extent, the present report has rectified a defect in the way the Council previously reported to the Assembly. While it is dramatically reduced in size, at the same time, it provides more statistical information on the Council's activities.

The most important innovation introduced to last year's report is also present in this year's report. The introduction of the current report highlights continued effort by the Council to present an analytical summary of its work for the period covered by the report, which represents an effort to address the main criticism repeated year after year in past General Assembly debates on the Council's report. While it is, undoubtedly, an improvement over preceding reports, we believe, however, that there is still room for improving the introduction by making it more analytical and less descriptive, and by providing information about informal consultations and rationales behind the decisions made by the Council.

The report is indicative of the large number of open meetings of the Council held in the period under review. The holding of 207 open meetings is significant and is one of the highest in the Council's history. That is partly because of the Council's crowded agenda last year and partly due to increased efforts in the area of transparency and openness in the work of the Council and its relationship with the wider United Nations membership. As a result, non-members of the Council had greater opportunity to participate in its work. It is important that the Council build upon this achievement and enhance links between the members of the Council and the Members of the General Assembly.

While the working methods of the Council were also improved over previous years, mainly as a result of ideas expressed and progress made in the course of the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform, it is noticeable, however, that, especially with regard to certain sensitive issues, the five permanent members are increasingly acquiring special privileges in considering and informally coordinating among themselves in a format where the elected members are absent.

It is unfortunate that last year, like preceding years, the number of issues on which the permanent five resorted to exclusive deliberations and embarked on a decision-making process of their own was on the rise. It is an unacceptable procedure, which is in contrast to the trend towards more transparency and democratization of the Council. That procedure, if unchecked, will prevent the elected members from fully participating in the work of the Council, thereby undermining further the legitimacy and the authority of its decisions.

Moreover, we notice a trend towards a more complicated decision-making process in the Council. The number of subsidiary organs of the Security Council is on the rise. Committees, monitoring groups and the like are proliferating and playing an increasingly important role in the work of the Council, in its decision-making or in the implementation of its decisions. It is very important that these subsidiary organs of the Council work in a way in which the general membership of the United Nations can receive adequate information on their role and functions.

While considering the functioning of the Security Council over past years, we cannot refrain from expressing our frustration at the Council's inability to address effectively the Palestinian question, which is one of the grave ongoing crises threatening peace and security in the sensitive region of the Middle East. It is appropriate and useful that, in the past year, the Council could convene monthly meetings at which members received briefings from the representative of the Secretary-General or high-ranking Secretariat officials. Undoubtedly, those meetings had an informative effect and helped the Council not to lose sight of the difficult situation in the Middle East.

While we hope that the monthly briefings continue this year, we hardly find it effective in meeting the responsibility shouldered by the Council. We acknowledge that the recourse to veto power several times in the past two years alone is responsible for the Council's paralysis in this area.

Undoubtedly, world public opinion has noted the double standard with which the Council treated, in the last year, the Iraqi question, on the one hand, and the Palestinian question, on the other. There should be no doubt that, in continuing to work that way, the Council does not contribute to its legitimacy and authority in the eyes of the general membership and of world public opinion.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Permanent Representative of the United States, the current President of the Security Council, for introducing the annual report of the Council covering the period from 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003 (A/58/2).

In the past few months, we have witnessed an intense international debate on the role of the United Nations, particularly of the Security Council. In many cases, during these debates, the ability of the United

Nations and the Security Council to act and to make decisions have been called into question and their future considered uncertain. In those circumstances, as President of the Rio Group, I felt that it was appropriate to invite to our Group the well-known academic, Mr. Paul Kennedy, Professor of History and Director of the Centre of International Security Studies at Yale University, to have a dialogue with the Ambassadors of the Rio Group on challenges to international security and on the future of the United Nations.

During our dialogue with Professor Kennedy, we drew the conclusion that global challenges such as terrorism, poverty, migration, drug trafficking, trafficking in people and weapons and increasing ecological deterioration are affecting the stability of all our societies, irrespective of borders. That is affecting international peace and security. We also agreed that today all these challenges form a complex interdependency, and therefore they cannot be addressed in a unilateral or isolated way, and much less through a purely military approach. Quite to the contrary, those challenges should be faced with a common strategy on the part of all of our countries. In other words, they cannot be overcome without multilateralism. That was also the conclusion reached by Harvard professors Joseph Nye and Samuel Huntington in recently published essays.

Lastly, it is becoming increasingly clear in world public opinion, the academic world and the diplomatic sphere that, given the current international situation, the United Nations is today the indispensable organization to overcome the challenges of the twenty-first century. A realistic collective security policy on the part of the Security Council will be the most appropriate way to overcome many of those challenges.

Nevertheless, we believe that the functions of the Security Council must be improved. Peru therefore supports a reform of the Security Council that makes it a more representative body and improves its decision-making process and working methods, so that it may effectively assume its responsibilities in the face of the challenges to international peace and security in the twenty-first century. But before any reform is carried out, it is imperative to ensure the fulfilment of the Council's resolutions and decisions so as to avoid losing credibility for that body in international public opinion, and consequently in the United Nations.

Adequate cooperation between the General Assembly and the Security Council is important to strengthening the United Nations. For example, the General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on the prevention of conflict is an example of that body's ability to contribute to the consideration of issues linked to the maintenance of international peace and security, which falls under the purview of the Security Council. That resolution encourages the Security Council to use appropriate mechanisms to contribute to the effective prevention of conflict.

We can also count on another resolution of the General Assembly that recognizes the importance of facing up to socio-economic aspects that could exacerbate civil conflicts. It also calls for the adoption of measures to promote sustainable development and the fight against poverty. The Security Council should in turn support such preventive efforts by the General Assembly.

Another step by the General Assembly that contributes to strengthening the credibility of the Security Council is the President's power, established in resolution 51/241, to carry out a closer examination of the Security Council's report. That power has not been exercised, largely owing to the sterility and lack of clarity that continues to characterize the report of the Security Council we are considering today.

My country has previously drawn attention to the fact that there is a need for the report of the Security Council to be transparent, based on the current international situation, and comprised of more analytical and political content. Its conclusion should not be limited solely to a list of documents; it should, among other things, include an accounting of the vetoes exercised and the arguments employed in doing so, a list of Security Council resolutions yet to be implemented and, lastly, a factual summary of the host of valuable ideas contained in the main proposals relating to each one the topics of the Council's agenda put forth by countries in the open meetings of the Council.

In connection with the report of the Security Council, a student of international relations desiring to glean a comprehensive perspective on international security today from the report of the Security Council, the main body entrusted with maintaining that security, would become lost in the endless lists of documents

and almost cryptic jargon that is understood only by initiates such as us.

In the globalized world, where information and transparency are the guarantee of democracy and truth, the intense work and primary activities carried out by the Security Council are, unfortunately, not clearly set forth. In that regard, the Security Council — the main instrument of international security — like other international organizations and bodies, runs the risk of becoming, through its reports, an entity removed from world public opinion that has no real meaning and that does not convey anything to the international community. It also runs the risk of being forgotten, passed over by other organizations that better communicate their performance.

My country makes those comments because it supports the work of the Security Council and wants to see it become more efficient and successful, as well as more open to cooperation, understanding and transparency vis-à-vis the international community.

My country would like to conclude by highlighting the efforts made to produce greater transparency in the Security Council — especially the significant number of open meetings that have been held, both thematic debates and meetings at which the Secretariat introduced reports on various subjects on the Council's agenda. Peru supports the continuation of such meetings, as well as of wrap-up meetings, which provide an opportunity for all interested States to participate in the establishment and strengthening of realistic collective security by the United Nations, which is a common responsibility of all of us.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Undoubtedly, the report of the Security Council submitted to the General Assembly at the current session reflects the number of challenges that arose during the period that it covers. Although a number of events and developments tested the Council's unity, effectiveness and credibility, other issues underscored its relevance as an important tool for dealing with international peace and security whenever permanent and non-permanent members of the Council could muster the necessary political will, sound vision, objectivity and transparency to address those pivotal issues.

In that context, we find that events in the period covered by the report pointed to the Council's role in addressing several central issues affecting the evolution of the concept of international peace and security at this critical stage in the history of international relations, issues such as international terrorism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mercenarism, the role of regional organizations in peace and security issues, the Council's function in the peaceful settlement of disputes and the role of the illicit diamond trade in fuelling conflicts. We hope that the Council's plenary debates on those issues will reflect a clearer vision and understanding of the challenges and threats facing the international community in terms of maintaining international peace and security. Moreover, we hope that next year there will be more interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and the wider United Nations membership on those and other issues.

The delegation of Egypt would like to express its appreciation to the Security Council for convening a series of special meetings with States that contribute troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions. That is the kind of dialogue and interaction needed to enhance such missions and to ensure their success. In our view, it is essential that in the coming period the Security Council continue to hold more such meetings in order to broaden and enrich the Council's perspective in addressing peace and security issues and to foster a concept of partnership among its members and all other concerned parties and actors, so as to form a collective international view regarding those issues. Here, I should like to stress the need to provide an opportunity for all non-members of the Council to exercise their right to fully express their views on all issues considered by the Council, without any attempt on the part of some parties in the Council to jeopardize that right based on non-compelling procedural or substantive pretexts.

The report of the Security Council shows that the bulk of the international peace and security issues before it continue to relate to Africa. Obviously, African issues and conflicts have created new kinds of challenges that require the United Nations to develop new ways to deal with them. In that regard, we welcome the trends in the past year towards the development of cooperation between the Council and international actors and African regional organizations in the fields of peacekeeping and conflict settlement on the continent. We also welcome the willingness to take a regional approach in dealing with the causes and parameters of African conflicts by dispatching Council

missions to Central and West Africa. We highlight the need to expand those trends and to consider ways and means of increasing their effectiveness.

However, we express concern at the Council's limited ability to respond expeditiously and effectively to the serious humanitarian and security crises faced by African nations and regions in the past year. That limited ability is reflected clearly in the reports and statistical data available to the United Nations and to international relief agencies with regard to the number of casualties, internally displaced persons and refugees caused by African conflicts. We observed the Council's reluctance for several months to deal with the grave massacres in the eastern and north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo until the forces and the mandate of the United Nations mission there were expanded to enhance the peace process and reconciliation. Also, we saw a similar Council reluctance to approve a multinational force in Liberia before a peacekeeping mission was mandated and deployed there. In addition, we find that the Council continues to face serious problems in dealing with issues in African post-conflict situations because of the required measures and efforts for those situations that transcend the limited traditional concept of security and peace.

The concept of peace and security has expanded to include economic, social, humanitarian and geographic dimensions that cannot be fragmented or addressed in isolation from the others. Hence, the Security Council is duty-bound to carry out its primary responsibility for maintaining and consolidating peace in post-conflict countries by coordinating and cooperating with the regional organizations concerned and with all other relevant United Nations organs and programmes — particularly the General Assembly and its Committees and the Economic and Social Council, since those two organs are the appropriate legislative mechanisms for developing a conceptual framework for peace-building in the fullest sense of the word. The delegation of Egypt believes that the reform process called for by the Secretary-General in his statement before the Assembly on 23 September 2003 must also include ways and means that will enable the Security Council to respond rapidly, with a more comprehensive vision, in order to meet the ever-increasing challenges to the maintenance and building of peace and security.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation will refer jointly to two important agenda items: the report of the Security Council and the question of Council representation.

Spain began its two-year term as a member of the Security Council on 1 January. During these almost 10 months on the Council, we have contributed to maintaining, and, where possible, to enhancing transparency in the Council's working methods.

May I mention just two examples. During Spain's presidency, there were a total of 17 open meetings, including formal meetings and open briefings — in other words, more than the number of informal consultations. Secondly, Spain drafted, together with the United Kingdom, the introduction to the report that is before us today. It did so with the objective of making it more accessible to all Members of the Organization.

We believe that considerable progress has been made in the area of Security Council transparency in recent years, but we must not be complacent, and we must continue to make progress in this direction.

We believe that it is a mistake to take an approach to Council reform that focuses exclusively on the concept of expansion. Reform is an all-inclusive subject in which at least three elements converge: composition, working methods and decision-making.

We have already referred to the question of working methods. As for the question of composition, most Member States believe that the Council, in an Organization that now has 191 Members, should be more representative — in other words, that it would have to be expanded.

Nonetheless, there are well-founded doubts about whether expansion would make the Council perform better. As was stated here in the General Assembly some days ago by the President of the Government of Spain, an increase in the number of Security Council members will not necessarily mean an increase in the Council's effectiveness.

Setting aside for the moment this question of expansion versus effectiveness, which is no trivial matter, let me say that my country believes it is obvious that the Council can be more representative only if we increase only the number of its elected members. Increasing the number of permanent members — in other words, swelling the ranks of those who have privileges under the Charter and including in

the United Nations aristocracy another handful of countries — would seem to us to be counterproductive.

The existence of the veto — that totally anti-democratic instrument of immense power — has been the subject of frequent complaints ever since the birth of our Organization. Is it conceivable that we should want, in 2003, to create a new category of the powerful? If the veto is indeed completely and intrinsically anti-democratic, should we give it to new permanent members?

This brings me to the question of decision-making. The process should reflect a greater balance between two essential elements: democracy and effectiveness. Here again the question of the veto arises. In these 10 months of our term on the Council, we have experienced situations involving vetoes and threats of vetoes — the so-called hidden veto. Those instances of vetoes used or suggested have hardly been to the satisfaction of the majority of Member States, and they have illustrated time and again the unusual power enjoyed by the permanent members, as well as the abyss of power that separates the permanent from the non-permanent members. Let us not give this elitist attribute to others.

We also see that the majority of Member States have called for greater democratization in the decision-making process, which is generally understood as meaning a reform of the veto through a reduction in the number of potential cases in which it can be applied. We believe, for example, that the exercise of the veto should be limited to Chapter VII cases. Furthermore, we would have to devise formulas that would prevent its use in cases of massive violations of human rights.

But let us have no illusions. This wish of the overwhelming majority for reform can become a reality only through the will of those that today possess this privilege. Given past experience and Article 108, unfortunately, this wish on the part of the majority is nothing but a dream. Only a balance among the different elements involved in reform can lead to a Security Council that is — as the representative of Italy said on behalf of the European Union in his statement before the Assembly — more representative, more effective and more democratic.

We know that this may be only a dream — but it is a wish that must be expressed.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): My delegation welcomes this opportunity to consider the report of the Security Council. We join others in thanking Ambassador John Negroponte, President of the Security Council for the month of October, for introducing the annual report of the Council to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We consider the annual reporting process by the Security Council to the General Assembly to be an important step. It is important not only with respect to the fulfilment of the provisions of the relevant articles of the Charter of the United Nations, but also as a way of maintaining the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly, as envisaged in the Charter.

This annual report should serve as a means for the general membership of the United Nations to become better acquainted with the work of the Security Council. Its consideration in the General Assembly will, it is hoped, provide useful feedback for the Council in the further improvement of its work.

The annual report by the Security Council to the General Assembly is an important element in the Charter relationship between these two major organs. The Charter requires that the Council submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration. This is provided for in articles 15 and 24. This clearly points to the need for the Council to be accountable to the larger membership of the United Nations.

In this connection, the General Assembly should have the opportunity to assess and judge the performance of the Council for the past year. In turn, Council members should have the opportunity to pay careful attention to the concerns, observations and comments of the larger membership of the United Nations. My delegation hopes that the comments and suggestions made in the General Assembly will receive appropriate consideration by the members of the Council in the further discharge of their responsibilities on behalf of all of us in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Last year, the report of the Council was introduced in a fresh, concise and improved format, which my delegation welcomed. We saw it as a reflection of the Council's willingness to evolve and improve its methods of work. We felt then that the Council had certainly heeded the comments made by

the larger membership over the years. We also welcomed the decision of the Security Council to hold an open meeting to discuss the Council's report prior to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. We are disappointed that the Council decided to do away with that practice during this session. We think that such an open meeting would be useful and that it should be held in the interest of further promoting transparency in the work of the Security Council.

My delegation finds that improvement in the format of the report does not necessarily bring about a qualitative improvement in the substance of the report. We think that the attempt introduced last year to provide some analytical reporting in the introduction could be further improved. We look forward to future reports containing more details and analyses. We have, for instance, called for a more detailed account of Council decisions and actions. We feel that an elaboration of the circumstances that had influenced the decisions of the Council on a particular issue would allow the larger membership to appreciate the achievements registered and difficulties faced by the Council. Perhaps, with better understanding, we might be able to offer useful suggestions to break an impasse in the Council or to enable it to make decisions that could be successfully implemented by the parties concerned and by the international community at large.

We had hoped that this report of the Council would contain an analysis as bold as the one provided by the Secretary-General in his reports on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323).

The holding of thematic discussions is useful for improving the effectiveness of the Council. We note that the Council held 15 thematic discussions during the reporting period on a wide range of issues. The exchange of views between Council members and non-members in these thematic discussions on issues relating to international peace and security will allow for the development of appropriate strategies that are more holistic and integrated, involving all the major organs of the United Nations. Nevertheless, such an exercise by the Security Council should not venture into areas that are rightly the responsibility of the other major organs of the United Nations.

Given the increased workload of the Council, it might be helpful if the thematic discussions were kept to a minimum in any particular year. They should be held not just for the sake of having discussions, but with a view to achieving concrete results, which would have an impact on the performance not only of the Security Council, but also of the United Nations at large. These thematic discussions and other important issues addressed by the Council from time to time would merit the submission of special reports to the General Assembly, when necessary, as provided for in the Charter.

We note that the Council's workload has continued to increase steadily. A total of 207 open meetings were held, and 66 resolutions were adopted.

Conflicts in Africa continue to dominate the work of the Council. Malaysia is pleased that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa has been active in its efforts to find lasting solutions to various conflicts on the continent. Two Security Council Missions were also organized, namely, to Central Africa and West Africa in June and July this year, and the Council has made some important recommendations to bring political stability to the subregions. We are also particularly pleased with the signing of a power-sharing agreement in Burundi. We look forward to the Council's taking more effective decisions on the conflict situations in Africa.

My delegation has noted that during the past year the Council discussed the Palestinian question with greater frequency. We have observed that 12 meetings and 21 informal consultations were held on this issue. Only one resolution was adopted by the Council. We recall that the international community welcomed the publication of the Quartet's road map in April. Yet the Council has not been able to play the role expected of it.

My delegation certainly welcomes the Council's consideration of the question of Palestine through the monthly briefings and open debates. Unfortunately, these have not had an impact on the situation on the ground. Indeed, the situation is clearly worsening. The violence continues, and the death toll has mounted on both sides. The Council must improve and maintain its credibility by enforcing its authority on this question, in particular in respect of the commitment to the road map and to a peaceful two-State solution, the end of occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, the termination of Israel's settler-colonialism activities and the construction of the separation wall.

The Council must not allow its resolutions to be manipulated, or the Council itself to be prevented from doing anything meaningful, as happened last month. It should resolutely take action on the illegal construction of the Israeli expansionist wall. My delegation hopes that this will be done soon on the basis of the initiative currently before the Council. My delegation also hopes that the Council will act decisively on the recent flagrant violation of Syria's territory by Israel.

Another issue that has brought great difficulty for the Council is that of Iraq. When we discussed the Council's report about a year ago, the threat to peace in Iraq was looming over our heads. Despite the call by an overwhelming majority in the United Nations for a peaceful solution, a war was launched against Iraq, led by two members of the Security Council. My delegation notes that the report gives a description of the events leading up to war. Clearly, the war without Security Council authorization has entailed a number of problems. It is my delegation's hope that the Security Council will be able to draw clear lessons from this particularly difficult and protracted issue. A major challenge for all of us, and a lesson to be learned, is how the Security Council can prevent such a situation from occurring again in the future.

My delegation believes that the United Nations must be made to assume its central role in the maintenance of international peace and security. It must be given major responsibility for resolving the problem in Iraq so that the people of Iraq can regain their sovereignty and their suffering can end. Sovereignty must be returned to the Iraqi people soon. They must be given the authority over their own natural resources, and this should be done quickly. Otherwise, the United Nations, which is a major instrument for promoting decolonization, would be seen as indifferent to the ending of the occupation of one of its Members. This would indeed be a tragedy.

On the issue of sanctions, Malaysia in principle opposes their imposition due to their debilitating impact on the general population of a Member State. Sanctions should be utilized as a measure of last resort and after careful consideration of their ramifications. Sanctions should hit their intended target and not the innocent populace. Sanctions must be devised with clear parameters, including specific and clearly identified targets, time frame and regular impact assessment. In this connection, we welcome the lifting by the Council of sanctions against Iraq and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

At the last session of the General Assembly, discussion on this item was held simultaneously with that on the item concerning reform of the Security Council. My delegation found it useful and fitting that the two items should be discussed together, as we believe that the issues under consideration are intertwined and have an important bearing on one another. In this connection, my delegation would also touch on the issue of reform of the Security Council at this juncture.

Malaysia is pleased that the Secretary-General, in outlining the tasks for the high-level panel of eminent persons on the reform of the Organization that he proposes to establish, has included the questions of peace and security as well as Security Council reform. These two subjects must go hand in hand. It is our conviction that the key to reforming the United Nations is its democratization, particularly of the Security Council. Not only should the Council's membership be democratized, but also, most important, so should its decision-making process.

Addressing the question of the veto is central to the reform of the United Nations. In this connection, it may be recalled that the Prime Minister of Malaysia proposed in his statement in the general debate, on 25 September, that the veto be modified. He proposed that a veto could be cast only when two veto Powers and three other members of the Council backed it. This modified veto should eventually be abolished and replaced by majority decisions. We believe that, gradually, the United Nations should be made more democratic, and the Prime Minister's proposal should provide a good basis on which to start.

The cooperation provided by Member States in the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee is an excellent illustration of effective multilateralism. Member States have readily cooperated in implementing Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We reiterate the importance of political will and sense of responsibility among all Member States in effecting this badly needed international cooperation to combat the scourge of international terrorism.

Sadly, such cooperation is not replicated in the implementation of many other Council resolutions. As they are legally binding, it is incumbent upon Member States to implement Security Council resolutions

without selectivity. The Security Council must play its role, without discrimination, to ensure that all Member States adhere to and implement its resolutions. In this connection, we repeat our support for the adoption by the Security Council of clear and precise indicators to measure its work. One such indicator is the level of compliance by Member States in implementing the resolutions of the Council. The Secretary-General has underscored the importance of legitimacy in the work of the United Nations. This question would be crucial in our endeavour to regain the credibility of the United Nations in the eyes of the international community. The legitimacy of action by the Council is at the forefront of this endeavour. Effective implementation of Council resolutions would pave the way to that end.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the Republic of Uzbekistan — the GUUAM member States.

First of all, I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the Security Council for the month of October, Ambassador John Negroponte of the United States, for presenting the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly (A/58/2). The promising practice of making this — in every sense weighty — document more analytical, practical and, at the same time, thinner and more elegant can be traced throughout the last several years. I believe we owe it, in particular, to the initiatives of present and former Council members, who have pursued the ideology of new and constructive change.

During the period under review, from August 2002 through July 2003, the Council maintained the important trend towards higher effectiveness and transparency, both in quality and in quantity.

A few months ago, addressing the Council meeting on cooperation with regional organizations, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed the feeling of global insecurity, which he said "has seldom, if ever, been greater than it is today" (S/PV.4739). Such a conclusion mirrors the magnitude of the critical challenges faced by the Security Council and the international community. Undoubtedly, an adequate response to the new threats should reflect our common desire for a strong peace and security framework, based firmly on the international rule of law.

Analysing the recent performance by the Council, we see that the formula of its success consists of four major elements: unity, which allows for overcoming national interests in order to reach collective agreement; political will, which moves the Council towards concrete and practical results; sufficiency, which helps to find appropriate methods, instead of appropriate explanations; and transparency, which expands the Council's capacity and impact on a wider number of international actors.

May I also highlight yet another important element, which is the transformation of its composition and geographical representation. Despite the understandable frustration over the slow progress in this area, we still count on the common will to reach a reasonable compromise for a comprehensive reform of the Council in all its aspects.

I trust you will agree that we all are interested in a strong, proactive and powerful Security Council. For all its real and perceived imperfections, the Security Council can and should be ready to provide the proper response to these new and important demands.

The past 12 months appear to be one of the most turbulent periods in the Council's recent history. Though the issue of Iraq almost divided the world community, the Security Council finally found a path of unanimity with the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002) and, in spite of later critical developments, it managed to keep on the consensus track with the adoption of resolutions 1472 (2003), 1476 (2003) and 1483 (2003).

Against this background, it is now important to focus efforts on securing law and order and promoting reconstruction in Iraq. The Security Council can play an even more prominent role in this process. Our countries look forward to adopting a new Council resolution, clarifying the path towards Iraqi self-governance and ensuring peace, stability and recovery.

At the same time, we should never forget the irretrievable losses that the United Nations suffered in the course of settling the Iraq issue. We lost excellent, talented and dedicated people, among them the outstanding Brazilian diplomat, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

It is a dramatic and disturbing fact that, during recent years, United Nations staff has been facing growing insecurity. This makes it all the more urgent for all members of the international community to fully

comply with the relevant international treaties and, first of all, with the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

This year the Security Council has been further challenged by developments in the Middle East and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The first encouraging steps in the resumed peace process earlier this year, based on the Quartet's road map, gave way to scepticism over the viability of the peace plan.

Although there were periods of relative calm, the terrorist attacks and the use of military force continued to take innocent lives. The recent suicide bombing in Haifa and the air strikes by Israel on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic led to the escalation of tensions in the Middle East. In general, we still lack final answers, and one of the major questions there is still whether the Security Council's reaction to these events is adequate and in conformity with its Charter responsibilities?

Another demanding problem is the situation in Afghanistan. We believe that the success of the Bonn process depends to a great extent on the security situation in Afghanistan. Therefore, it is difficult to overestimate the significance of timely and target-oriented actions of the Council and of the global antiterrorist coalition.

The GUUAM group welcomes the decision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to take over the command of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, and believes that it is time to renew the Force's mandate.

Regarding European issues, the GUUAM group is concerned with a lack of progress in the settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia. We call on the Abkhaz side to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions and to accept the document on "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" as a basis for negotiations on the key issue of the political status of Abkhazia, within the State of Georgia.

The convening of two meetings of senior representatives of the group of friends of the Secretary-General on Georgia in Geneva, and the summit meeting between the Presidents of Georgia and the Russian Federation in Sochi gave positive impetus to the peace process. The GUUAM group hopes that the dialogue established between the sides will lead to concrete results, and that the more active efforts of the United Nations, the Security Council, the group of friends and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe will make the encouraging tendency irreversible.

In speaking of the wider range of the Council's activities, we are glad to note the final settlement of the Libyan problem. Positive developments have been evident in the resolution of African conflicts. The Security Council further strengthened its interaction with other United Nations bodies, in particular with the Economic and Social Council. Those developments mark a positive trend.

Of particular importance is enhanced cooperation between the Council and the European Union, as well as between the Council and African regional organizations. The deployment of European Union forces in Bunia and the role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia were instrumental in dealing with security and humanitarian crises in the region. We hope that the newly established United Nations Mission in Liberia — one of the major United Nations missions undertaken to date — will succeed in bringing further stability to that embattled country.

The Security Council continues to play a central role in facilitating cooperation among Governments in the fight against international terrorism. The GUUAM countries welcome the endeavours of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to provide all possible assistance to the multinational anti-terrorist coalition by strengthening the capacities of regional organizations and groups.

The CTC's meeting of 6 March with representatives of regional organizations — a meeting in which the GUUAM group took an active part — proved that there is great potential in that sphere. I would also like to emphasize that the GUUAM group took an active part in the most recent follow-up meeting for regional and subregional organizations, held on 7 October in Washington, D.C., by the CTC and the Organization of American States.

We are confident that the further expansion of dialogue and cooperation between the Council and its regional partners will remain a priority task. Successful examples of the interaction of the Security Council with the European Union, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the African

Union, ECOWAS, the Organization of American States, the League of Arab States and other institutions prove that the United Nations could and should actively use this important political tool to rely increasingly on regional organizations to assume more responsibility, especially for peacekeeping efforts.

The GUUAM group stands ready to cooperate fully with the Council and to help it to pursue its Charter responsibilities.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to Ambassador John Negroponte, Permanent Representative of the United States of America and President of the Security Council for this month, for his lucid introduction of the annual report of the Security Council for the period 1 August 2002 to 31 July 2003 (A/58/2). I would also like to thank the United Kingdom and Spain for drafting the introduction to the report. Taken as a whole, the information detailed in the report conveys a picture of the busy schedule that characterized the Council's work during the period covered.

My delegation appreciates the Council's focus on peacekeeping and its comprehensive approach to dealing with the maintenance of international peace and security, for which it has the primary responsibility. We are encouraged by the fact that the Council paid particular attention to conflict prevention, resolution and management. We would like to urge the Council to continue to focus its attention on those issues, given the gravity, complexity and multifaceted nature of the problems and conflicts bedevilling various regions and the need for peace and security, which are prerequisites for promoting development and stability. In this regard, we cannot overemphasize the need for the Council to cooperate with the General Assembly, and with the Economic and Social Council and other development bodies, given the interrelationship among peace, security and development.

My delegation also notes with appreciation the Council's continued dedication of most of its efforts to the African region. This has been evidenced in its various debates on several conflict situations in the continent, such as those in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Somalia and the Central African Republic, and also in the holding of two missions to Central and West Africa, in June and July 2003 respectively. It is our hope that with the requisite political will, that time and effort will be translated into concrete strategic solutions to the conflicts plaguing the region. In order for the missions to have greater impact, they should be of longer duration and should not involve visits to too many countries.

Furthermore, we welcome the consultations and complementary initiatives on which the Council embarked with regional and subregional institutions; we would like to encourage the Council to stay on course. We are of the firm conviction that partnerships with subregional and regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) could go a long way towards helping to find lasting solutions with respect to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Having brokered the Accra Accord to bring under control the conflict in Liberia — and, in effect, in the Mano River Union countries — ECOWAS would like to cooperate with the international community in order to identify ways in which vital partnerships can prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in the West African subregion.

I would like to recall that last year my delegation added its voice to the call for more information to be provided in the report with respect to Security Council missions to conflict areas, so as to enable us to acquire first-hand information — if the Council was going to continue to rely on that system, as we thought it should. I would like to congratulate the members of the Security Council for improvements in that regard; the present report presents a much more detailed account of those trips.

Over the years, my delegation has been among those calling for improvements in the report and in the procedures and working methods of the Security Council. Last year, we commended the Council for coming out with a new format, which was more compact and reader-friendly. However, much remains to be done in improving upon the analytical framework. This year's report, too, lacks the requisite information for an evaluation of the Council's work.

We are encouraged by the number of open meetings and by the monthly briefings given by the presidency of the Council, as well as by the periodic wrap-up meetings to which non-members were invited. The holding of such open meetings should not be seen

just as a matter of going through the motions. If they are to prove useful, the views expressed by Member States should be taken into account when real decisions are made by the Council.

We wish to commend the Council for its pivotal role in the global campaign against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Counter-Terrorism Committee is a good example of transparency, and we congratulate the previous Chairman, Sir Jeremy Greenstock of the United Kingdom, for his yeoman service, and we welcome the further efforts of his successor, Ambassador Arias of Spain, in that direction.

We also wish to applaud the functioning of the mechanism to further improve cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries, especially the growing regularity and frequency of meetings with those countries. My delegation believes that that consultative mechanism has inherent benefits for all the parties involved in peacekeeping.

It cannot be gainsaid that this has been a very trying year for the United Nations in the area of peace and security. The obvious schisms that arose over the situation in Iraq sorely tested the principle of collective security and the resilience of the Organization. The experience gained from these trying times, in which the Organization is hard-pressed to reassert its indisputable relevance in the contemporary global context, should lead us to a clear understanding of the ever-present fact that the world desires a United Nations whose image reflects its true nature as an international instrument designed to achieving the common end of a just and stable world order — one that is not subject to the pursuit of the narrow parochial interests of a powerful few.

My delegation therefore wishes to reiterate the imperative need to enhance the credibility of the Council through substantive reform guided by the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Today I would like to develop three ideas. The first is that we could have made do with just one debate on these issues instead of two; secondly, the working methods of the Security Council can be improved further; and, thirdly and most important, we all must support the broader reform effort launched by the Secretary-General, even as we continue our own efforts to reform the Council, the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies.

We are pleased to see that, once again, the report of the Security Council (A/58/2) is more concise than those of previous years. That is a step forward that should facilitate our deliberations. Having said that, I am disappointed that we have also taken a step backward. Last year, we instituted a joint debate on the report of the Security Council and on the question of representation on the Council. This year we are back to the two-debate format, which only consumes extra time and appears to go against the flow of reform ideas.

This is particularly regrettable, as the Secretary-General is about to form his panel of eminent personalities with the mandate to examine reform. We can and must use our time more efficiently and effectively.

(*spoke in English*)

With regard to the Council's methods, we would like to see still greater transparency; self-discipline in the recourse to the threat or the use of the veto; a voluntary commitment by veto holders to explain to the entire membership the rationale in each case why a veto has been used; and, as regards the Council's treatment of the International Criminal Court, greater adherence to the Charter.

We would also like to see more systematic consultation with non-members of the Council on matters of significant interest to them. We are pleased, in this regard, that the Council has begun to consult troop-contributing countries more formally on military mission mandates. None of us here has any doubt today that we live in troubled times, times when soldiers of peace are attacked, such as the two Canadian soldiers killed in Kabul just 10 days ago or the 22 United Nations staffers killed in Baghdad two months ago. These and other attacks are attacks against us all, for, as the Secretary-General has said, we are the United Nations. We live in times when terrorists target the innocent, when abject poverty is the daily reality for so many of our fellow human beings, and when some leaders have to be reminded that the State exists for the people, not the people for the State, that sovereignty entails responsibilities as well as privileges, and that the primordial responsibility of States — and their leaders — is to protect their own people. Most germane for the people in this Hall, we are living in times when many of our own people are losing faith in this Organization and in us, and in this Organization's — that is to say our — ability to respond to these challenges.

Clearly, the United Nations has much to be proud of, from its 50 plus years of peacekeeping operations, to the arms control regimes it has created, to the six core human rights treaties it has passed, to the international courts — especially the International Criminal Court — that it has sponsored, to the 120 environmental agreements it has brought about, to the children it has fed and educated and inoculated, to the refugees it has saved and sheltered and to the leadership it is providing on health, particularly on HIV/AIDS.

But, equally clearly, all is not well here. As Secretary-General Annan indicated during his address to the General Assembly on 23 September, we have come to a fork in the road. Few among us would disagree that our Organization needs thorough, far-reaching reform. To continue with business as usual in these circumstances would be an exercise in complacency and an abdication of our responsibilities. We need to reconsider both what this Organization does and how it does it.

In considering these purposes and practices, we need to serve the interests of both the least and the greatest among us. Otherwise, we risk being inadequate to the needs of the former and irrelevant to the fears of the latter. We need, as the Secretary-General said here on 23 September, in his seminal address, to "face up squarely to the concerns that make some States feel uniquely vulnerable, since it is those concerns that drive them to take unilateral action" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

We need, no less urgently, to agree that we have a collective responsibility to protect the innocent by preventing conflicts, by reacting to conflicts where we have not succeeded in preventing them and by rebuilding societies after conflicts are over.

We need to ensure that we deal effectively with the weaknesses of both the Security Council and the other organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly. That is why we welcome the Secretary-General's decision to establish a panel of eminent persons to make recommendations to States both on what the United Nations does and how it does it — or how it should do it. It is an idea that Canada heartily endorses. The Secretary-General is seeking to break the reform logjam. Let us work with him and with his panel of eminent persons so that, in a year's time, they can make the soundest possible proposals for change to our Governments: to the membership.

Meanwhile, let us keep an open mind on what that change should entail. And, in the interim, let us go on ourselves, improving the way we do business, including here in the General Assembly. Let us resolve here that the 191 delegations that inhabit this place will be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

Reflecting on his experience with the United Nations, the late Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, a former President of the General Assembly, wrote that

> "the growth of the United Nations into a truly effective world organization was our best, and perhaps our last, hope ... if mankind was to end a savage tradition that the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."

In the intervening 50 years, we have made enormous progress. But times change, needs change and now we need the United Nations to change.

Prime Minister Pearson's generation bequeathed us this magnificent, crucial Organization. It is up to our generation now to renew it and regenerate it. None of us here doubts that multilateral cooperation is indispensable, or that global issues respond only to global solutions, or that the United Nations is and must be at the heart of the multilateral system and is, or should be, essential to the legitimacy of international actions. No time is perfect for reform, but a historic opportunity is emerging here, and we should seize that opportunity.

Our parents and grandparents, realistic idealists who experienced the worst war in history, bequeathed to us the extraordinary idea that nations could unite to build better lives for their people; that they could unite to safeguard the rights and the dignity of the men and the women of nations large and small; and that they could unite to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

That dream remains unfulfilled for many people. And, for all people, that dream at times recedes. But it remains a dream that time has not mocked.

At San Francisco, the leaders of another generation, in times no easier than these, dreamt of a better world and created an institution with which to build it. Let us, let our generation, revive the dream. Let it be said of us by the generation that follows us that we were worthy descendants of the giants who created this place and that, when challenged, we did not fail them or their idea of the United Nations that they bequeathed to us.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.